

Appl. No.: 10/072,789
Amdt. Dated 05/06/05
Reply to Final Office Action of 03/07/2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that Claims 32-44 are allowed and that Claims 2, 4-6, 10, 12-14, and 17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 to incorporate the limitations of dependent Claim 6 and have amended independent Claim 9 to incorporate the limitations of dependent Claim 17. As a result of these amendments, Applicants have cancelled Claims 4-6 and 17. Applicants request reconsideration of Claims 1-3 and 7-16 in view of the Amendments and Remarks set forth herein.

Correction of Status Identifier – Claim 12

In reviewing Applicants' previous Amendment dated December 7, 2004, it was noted that Claim 12 erroneously included the status identifier (original) instead of (currently amended). The status identifier for Claim 12 is correctly noted as (previously presented) in the present Amendment.

The Rejections Directed to Claims 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15, and 16 Are Overcome

The Office Action rejected Claims 7, 8, 15, and 16 (and presumably Claims 1 and 3) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 4,693,747 to Bretz et al. Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 to incorporate the limitations of dependent Claim 6 and have amended independent Claim 9 to incorporate the limitations of dependent Claim 17. Since the Office Action indicated that Claims 2, 4-6, 10, 12-14, and 17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims, Applicants submit that newly presented amended independent Claims 1 and 9, and the claims depending therefrom, should be allowed. Applicants submit that entry and consideration of the amendments canceling Claims 4-6 and 17 and incorporating the limitations of dependent Claims 6 and 17 into independent Claims 1 and 9, respectively, is proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116(b), since the amendments are canceling claims and complying with a requirement

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of form set forth in a previous Office Action, and (or in the alternative), is proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116(c), since the amendments place all of the pending claims in condition for allowance and the allowability of dependent Claims 6 and 17 was not indicated by the Examiner until the Final Office Action.

Consideration Of Previously Submitted Information Disclosure Statement

It is noted that an initialed copy of the PTO Form 1449 that was submitted with Applicants' Information Disclosure Statement filed March 3, 2005 has not been returned to Applicants' representative. Accordingly, it is requested that an initialed copy of the Form 1449 be forwarded to the undersigned with the next communication from the PTO. In order to facilitate review of the references by the Examiner, a copy of the Information Disclosure Statement and the Form 1449 are attached hereto. Copies of the cited references were provided at the time of filing the original Information Disclosure Statement, and, therefore, no additional copies of the references are submitted herewith. Applicants will be pleased to provide additional copies of the references upon the Examiner's request if it proves difficult to locate the original references.

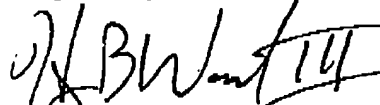
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1-3 and 7-16 and 32-44 of the present application are in condition for allowance. It is respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance be issued in due course. Examiner Wyszomierski is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite examination of the present application.

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It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,




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CERTIFICATION OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office at Fax No. (703) 872-9306 on the date shown below.


Janet Sherrill

May 6, 2005
Date

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